MARVEL COMICS
DEC
#2
HEROES REBORN
THE RETURN
PART 2 OF 4
THE BATTLE BEGINS...
...TO SAVE TWO WORLDS!
Featuring:
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STAN LEE PRESENTS:
HEROES REBORN
THE RETURN PART 2 OF 4
MORTAL! "SORCERER SUPREME" WHO TRAVAILS UNDER THE APT NAME OF "DOCTOR STRANGE..." LABORING AWAY IN YOUR PRECIOUS SANCTUM WITH YOUR TRIVIAL "ORB OF AGAMOTTO..."
...CEASE SUCH TIME-WASTING FOOLISHNESS TO REFLECT NEW PRIORITIES, FOR LOKI ODINSON, THE TRICKSTER, HAS NEED OF THEE!
SECOND COMING
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OF ALL WHO WALK YOUR PALTRY PLANET, I PERCEIVE ONLY *YOU* HAVE A *GLIMMERING* OF WHAT HAS TRULY HAPPENED! ONLY YOU KNOW THAT AN *ALTERNATE* UNIVERSE EXISTS... WITHIN WHICH MANY POWERFUL BEINGS ARE *TRAPPED*...
INCLUDING *YOU*, OLD ENEMY?
YOU NE'ER POSED SUFFICIENT *THREAT* TO CONSTITUTE AN ENEMY.
NOR AN *ALLY*, APPARENTLY... UNTIL *NOW*. BUT I'VE NO IDEA HOW TO RELEASE YOU, LOKI.
I SENSE THERE IS SOME MEANS OF ACCESS OTHER THAN THE FAIRLY VOLATILE ENERGIES POSSESSED BY THE HULK... BUT I CAN'T *LOCATE* IT.
HOWEVER... WHAT I *HAVE* LOCATED... IS *YOU*...
...IN *THIS* DIMENSION. SAFE, SOUND, AND MAKING TROUBLE.
CALUMNIES! ABSURDITY!
CLAIM YOU I BE A BASE IMPOSTOR?! *FIE!*
FIND A *NEXUS POINT*, STRANGE! FOR MY MAGIKS TELL ME THAT TIME GROWS SHORT!
MATTERS OF *COSMIC* CONSIDERATION CONVERGE UPON BOTH YOUR WORLDS!
MIGHT I SUGGEST ALLYING YOURSELF WITH *THOR*...
... PRESUMING HE'S THERE WITH YOU? OR WOULD *DEATH* BE A *PREFERABLE* ALTERNATIVE?
MAYHAP.

LOKI?
LOKI, WHAT IS HAPPENING? WHAT DO YOU SEE...?
STAY... STAY BACK!
NO! STAY BACK! I DEFY YOU!
I AM A GOD OF ASGARD! YOU CANNOT TREAT ME IN THIS MANNER!
YOU CANNOT!!
BRA KOOM
GONE. NOT THAT HE WAS EVER TRULY HERE.
WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE VISHANTI COULD SO ALARM A GOD?

GREETINGS, GODLING. I AM ASHEMA OF THE CELESTIALS!
BEYOND THE EDGE OF SUBSPACE, TO THE CUSP OF ETERNITY, HAVE I BROUGHT YOU TO INFORM YOU THAT THIS BUSINESS IS NOT YOURS TO INTERFERE WITH.
OUR AFFAIRS ARE AS FAR ABOVE YOURS AS YOURS ARE ABOVE AN ANT'S.
AND WE DEAL WITH YOU... AS YOU WOULD AN ANT...
NOOOO!

WHO WAS SCREAMIN' JUST NOW?!
WHAT THE --?
AND THAT'S WHAT'S HAPPENING, MA/ DAD/ HONEST/ I'M NOT LYING/ I NEVER LIED TO YOU/
OKAY, OKAY, I BROKE THE COOKIE JAR/
COOKIE... JAR?
THAT TIME/ THAT TIME I SAID I DIDN'T KNOW WHO BROKE THE COOKIE JAR, BUT UNCA BEN, HE SAID HE DID IT?
BUT IT WAS ME AND HE JUST DIDN'T WANNA SEE ME GET IN TROUBLE/
"UNCLE BEN"?
HE'S... THE BOY, REED/ THE ONE I SAW... AT THE EDGES OF THE NEGATIVE ZONE... WITH ME/ ANOTHER ME/
OUR... OUR SON/
WHAT... ARE YOU?

Y'GOTTA BELIEVE ME! THE CESTIALS ARE COMIN', AND I GOTTA MAKE A WHOLE WORLD GO 'WAY, AND I DUNNO WHICH ONE!
I MADE THIS WORLD TO SAVE YOU... I DUNNO HOW, BUT I DID! AND I GOTTA FIGGER OUT HOW TO SAVE EVERY-BODY B'FORE IT'S --!
FRANKLIN!
FRANKLIN!
SUSAN, CALM DOWN...
IT WAS HIM, REED! THE BOY I SAW IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE, WITH ME, EXCEPT IT WASN'T ME!
AND FRANKLIN WAS MY FATHER'S NAME! HE --!
SUE, LET'S BE REASONABLE. THIS --
HE'S OUR SON, REED. I DON'T KNOW HOW I KNOW... BUT I DO.
PROMISE ME YOU'LL HELP HIM. PROMISE.
I PROMISE.

WHILE, A UNIVERSE AWAY, IN FOREST HILLS...
OOOYY...
I'M GOING STIR CRAZY. FEEL LIKE I SHOULD BE OUT DOING SOMETHING...
...INSTEAD OF SITTING HERE, STEWING INSIDE.
AND I FEEL LIKE... I'M NEEDED SOMEWHERE. JUST WISH I KNEW WHERE THAT WAS...
AND WHILE SUPER-POWERED CITIZENS PITCH IN ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO DEAL WITH DISASTERS CAUSED BY THE COAST-TO-COAST TORRENTIAL RAINS...
...HERE IN MANHATTAN, REPORTS OF THE HULK'S PRESENCE HAVE LEFT CITIZENS ON EDGE... AND THERE ARE FEW "DEFENDERS" AVAILABLE TO DEAL WITH THIS MENACE.
Uh BOY.
BY THIS TIME TOMORROW, I'M GONNA BE SICK AS A DOG.
PRESUMING I'M LUCKY ENOUGH TO LIVE THAT LONG.

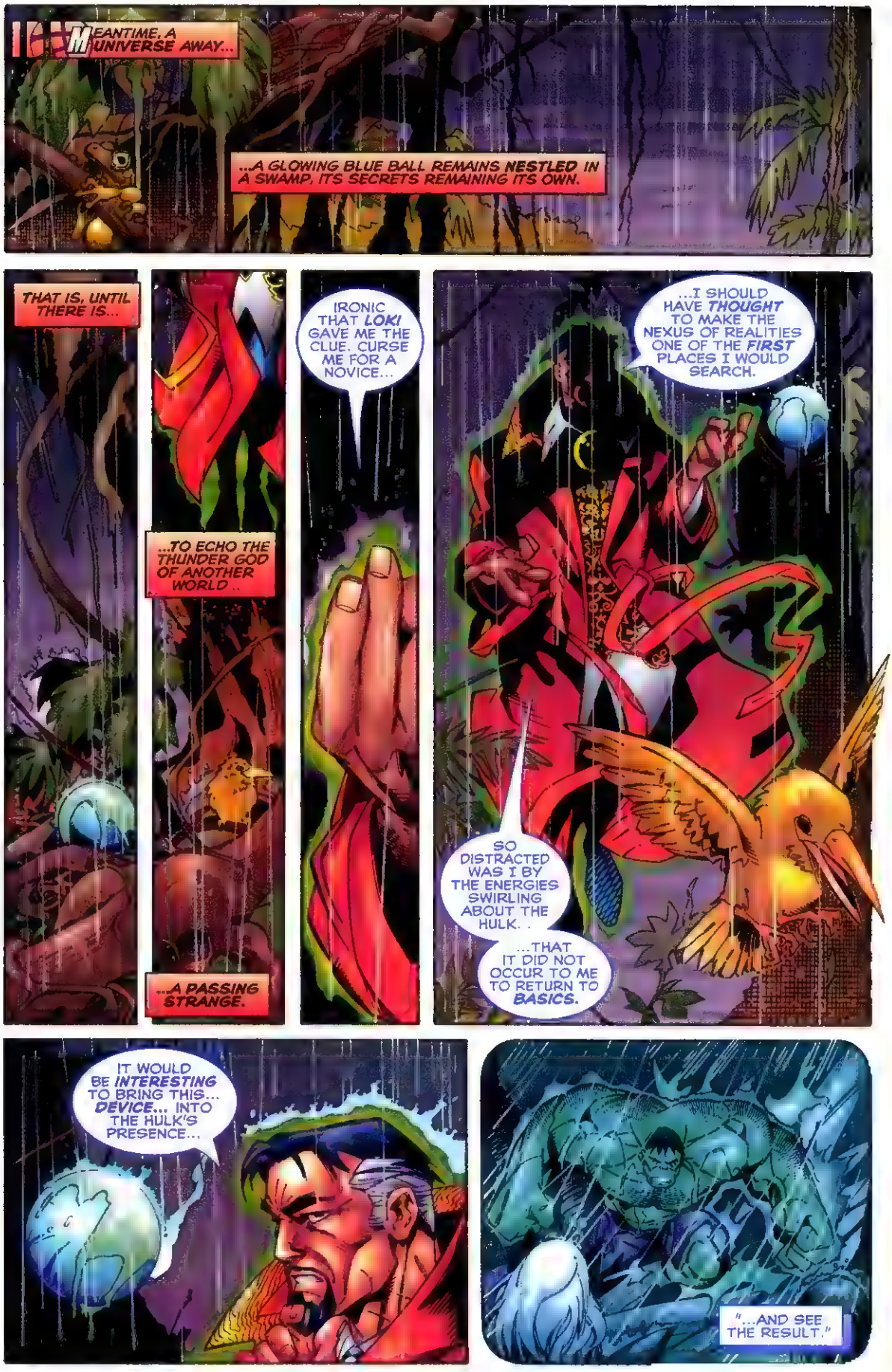
A CHORUS LINE
THEY SAY THAT THERE IS A LIGHT ON BROADWAY FOR EVERY BROKEN HEART.
THE INCREDIBLE HULK CARES LITTLE ABOUT EITHER.
PEOPLE SCATTER AS HE APPROACHES. HE BARELY NOTICES.
Jekyll AND HYDE
LIGHTS SHORT OUT AS HE PASSES.
DOESN'T REGISTER AT ALL.
ENERGY RAGES WITHIN HIM THAT HE CANNOT CONTROL.
HE HAS NEVER BEEN STRONGER...
...AND HE'S DYING.
HULK! YOU MUST SURRENDER!
NOW!
BUT GOING QUIETLY INTO THE GOOD NIGHT... IS NOT HIS STYLE.

BRUCE... COLONEL ST. LAWRENCE DOESN'T WANT TO HAVE TO FIRE ON YOU!
BUT YOU'RE SHORTING OUT ENERGY ALL OVER THE PLACE! YOU'RE GIVING OFF WAVES OF... OF POWER THAT WE CAN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND!
YOU HAVE TO BE CONTAINED! YOU HAVE TO --!
LEAVE ME...
...ALONE!
HE'S GOING FOR IT! TAKE HIM DOWN!
THIS IS MACH-1 TO STRIKE TEAM! I'M KEEPING MY DISTANCE FROM HIM SO HE DOESN'T BLOW OUT MY ARMOR...
BUT I'VE STILL GOT ENOUGH POP TO SEND HIM THE RIGHT WAY!
WAAM

PARK... REMEMBER THIS PARK...
...ALL STARTED HERE... FIGURES... COMES BACK AROUND.
HULK! 'TIS HERCULES, YOUR ERSTWHILE OPPONENT, WHO ADDRESSES YOU NOW!
I REGRET THAT YOU PERCEIVE YOURSELF PERSECUTED... EVEN BY SUCH A RELATIVELY MEAGER ASSEMBLAGE AS THIS --
Oh, ON BEHALF OF THE THUNDERBOLTS, THANKS A FREAKIN' LOT, HERC...
QUIET, ATLAS... OR I SHALL REQUEST THE GENUINE ATLAS HAVE WORDS WITH YOU.
NOW THEN... HULK...
YOU DON'T GET IT! NO ONE GETS IT!
NO ONE --

-- DEFEATS THE HULK!
IN THE OTHER UNIVERSE, THE OTHER HULK, YET STILL EARTH...
PERHAPS THOU WERE NOT SET FOR A REMATCH QUITE SO SOON... BUT I AM MORE THAN PREPARED.
PREPARED... TO DIE... THUNDER MAN?
READILY, FOR THE GOOD OF ALL, WOULD I SACRIFICE ALL.
BUT METHINKS 'TWILL NOT COME TO THAT --
-- EH?!?
ODIN'S EYE! WHAT HAPPENSTANCE IS THIS?!
MAGMA, AS IF FROM THE FLAMING GULLET OF SURTUR HIMSELF!
HEELLLPP!!

CALMLY, MORTALS! THE WHIRLING POWER OF MJOLNIR WILL PROTECT THEE!
GONE. WHILST I SAVED INNOCENTS, THE HULK TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEPART.
A WISE, IF MONSTROUS, TACTIC.
AND NOW THE LAVA SUBSIDES, AS IF NOTHING HAD BEEN AMISS. 'TIS PASSING STRANGE...
...AND THE CLIME... IS SOMEWHAT HOTTER THAN MY NORTHERN UPBRINGING WOULD CONSIDER... COMFORTABLE.


MEANTIME, A UNIVERSE AWAY...
...A GLOWING BLUE BALL REMAINS NESTLED IN A SWAMP, ITS SECRETS REMAINING ITS OWN.
THAT IS, UNTIL THERE IS...
...TO ECHO THE THUNDER GOD OF ANOTHER WORLD...
...A PASSING STRANGE.
IRONIC THAT LOKI GAVE ME THE CLUE. CURSE ME FOR A NOVICE...
...I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT TO MAKE THE NEXUS OF REALITIES ONE OF THE FIRST PLACES I WOULD SEARCH.
SO DISTRACTED WAS I BY THE ENERGIES SWIRLING ABOUT THE HULK...
...THAT IT DID NOT OCCUR TO ME TO RETURN TO BASICS.
IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO BRING THIS... DEVICE... INTO THE HULK'S PRESENCE...
"...AND SEE THE RESULT."

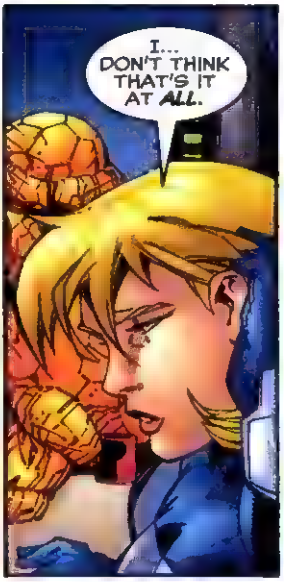
WHILE, IN THE PLACE OF NO RAIN...
WHY DID YOU TAKE ME AWAY FROM MY MOMMY AND DADDY?! I NEED THEIR HELP --!
DO NOT. YOU NEED ONLY YOURSELF TO MAKE TH DETERMIN
THEY'RE NOT "LESSER BEANS," ASHEMA! THEY'RE MY MOM AND DAD, AND THIS IS MY PLACE, AND YOU WANT ME TO MAKE IT ALL GO 'WAY?
DO NOT BECOME CROSS WITH ME, FRANKLIN THEREIN LIES GREAT DANGER
WE CELESTIALS MAY BE INFINITE, BUT OUR PATIENCE IS NOT. AND WE ARE TAKING STEPS TO SOLVE TH PROBLEM IF YOU DO NOT.
I'M GETTING TIRED OF YOU! YOU'RE MEAN AND YOU WANT ME TO MAKE EVER'BODY GO 'WAY! WELL, I WANT YOU TO GO 'WAY!

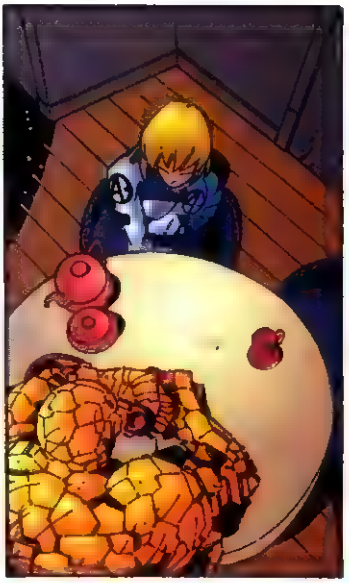
HEY, WHAT'S THAT?!
IT'S A CUB! A BEAR CUB!
HE MUSTA LOST HIS MOMMY IN THE JUNGLE!
SOMETHIN' HURT HIM, ASHEMA. SOME BIG ANIMAL MUSTA TRIED TO EAT HIM OR SOMETHIN'!
CAN YOU HELP HIM?
I DUNNO HOW. YOU DO IT. PLEASE...
IT'S MERELY A CREATURE ... MEANS NOTHING...
HE NEVER HURT ANYBODY! HE MEANS SOMETHIN' TO ME, AND IF I MEAN SOMETHIN' TO YOU, THEN HE SHOULD, TOO!

YOU DID IT! THANK YOU!
YOU'RE NOT SCARY AFTER ALL!
AND JUST LIKE THAT... THE BEAR IS GONE. SNUFFED OUT.
IT MEANS NOTHING.
I HATE YOU!
UHH!
THAT WAS...

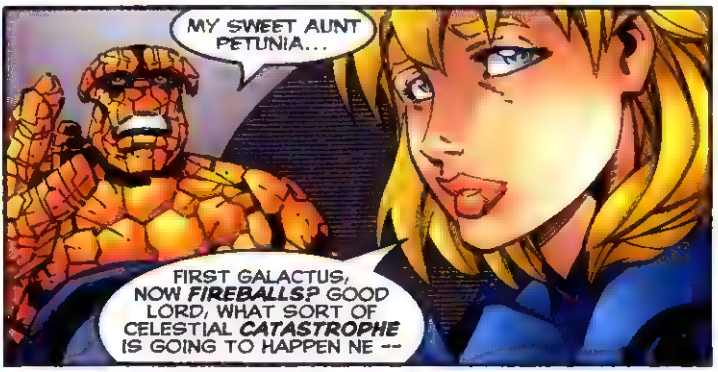
Hmmm.
I DO NOT LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS.
IT MAY BE THAT OUR DEEP SPACE PROBLEMS DID NOT END WITH THE DEPARTURE OF GALACTUS.
HEY, SUSIE-Q. TIRED O' HANGING OUT WITH STRETCH?
BEN... I'VE MADE A COMPLETE IDIOT OF MYSELF.
AWW, C'MON. BEIN' HARD ON YOURSELF, AIN'T'CHA?
I THINK IT'S JUST... JUST EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH. ALL THE STRAIN LATELY...

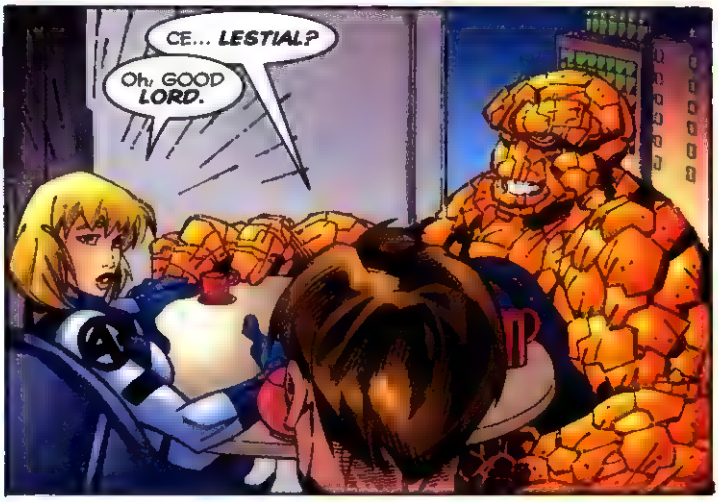
MEBBE. OR MEBBE IT'S 'CAUSE YOU WANTED T' BELIEVE YOU HAD A KID...
...EVEN IF IT MEANT THE WHOLE WORLD WAS COMIN' TO AN END BECAUSE OF THE "CESTIALS."


I... DON'T THINK THAT'S IT AT ALL.



WE HAVE A PROBLEM.
I'M TRACKING TWO FIREBALLS OF UNKNOWN ORIGINS --
-- AND THEY'RE ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH EARTH --
-- AND IT'S GROWING.
FURTHERMORE, I'VE RECORDED A TWO-DEGREE INCREASE IN WORLD-WIDE TEMPERATURE --
TO CAP IT OFF, THERE WAS A LAVA GEYSER IN MIDTOWN.


MY SWEET AUNT PETUNIA...
FIRST GALACTUS, NOW FIREBALLS? GOOD LORD, WHAT SORT OF CELESTIAL CATASTROPHE IS GOING TO HAPPEN NE --


CE... LESTIAL?
Oh, GOOD LORD.

NOT "CESTIAL." "CELESTIAL."
I'M CALLING TONY IN ON THIS... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

CENTRAL PARK, A UNIVERSE AWAY...
...AS THE VERY ELEMENTS SEEM TO LEAD TO THE HULK'S UNCONSCIOUS COMMANDS.
A DOWNPOUR TRANSFORMS ITSELF INTO A DELUGE, TORRENTIAL WAVES DRIVING BACK THE HULK'S ATTACKS.
TOO LATE, DO YOU HEAR ME?!

TOO LATE TO SAVE ME... OR THE WORLD!
TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING, EXCEPT LEAVE ME ALONE!
SO WHY WON'T YOU DO THE ONE THING YOU CAN... AND LEAVE!
WHILE, PERCHED IN A NEARBY TREE...
AWW, BROTHER...
...IT'S MOMENTS LIKE THIS I WISH I WAS JUST A CLONE.
WELL... NOW IT'S THE TIME TO SEE WHETHER THE ENERGIES OF THIS BALL ARE --
-- Eh?

HEY, HERCULES! SON OF A GOD --
--LOOKS LIKE, FOR ONCE, GOD'S ON MY SIDE!
HULK! YOU'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE! GET SOMEWHERE SAFE, BEFORE YOU DESTROY THE WHOLE CITY JUST BY STANDING THERE!
Aw, GO HANG OUT WITH XENA OR SOMETHING!
HULK, LISTEN TO ME --!
NO! I'M THROUGH LISTENING! I DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO ANYONE! I'M...
GLUB! SPIDER-MAN! BE GONE, WEBBED ONE! YOU'LL SERVE NO PURPOSE HERE!
...Huh?
WHOOAAA

FRANKLINNNNN
Uh oh!...
THE CELESTIALS' ARRIVAL BRINGS MATTERS TO A CLIMAX, FRANKLIN!
AS THE COMING OF WHALES CREATES GREAT WAVES...
...SO DOES THE COMING OF THE CELESTIALS CREATE ENERGY WAVES WHICH THREATEN NOT ONLY YOUR WORLD OF BIRTH...
...BUT THE WORLD WHICH YOU BIRTHED.
IF YOU DO NOT CHOOSE, WE SHALL CHOOSE FOR YOU...
...AND THE CHOICE SHALL BE TO OBLITERATE --
...ALLLL RIGHTY... NOW HOW THE HECK DID WE GET HERE?
RAIN'S ALL GONE. IT'S SO HOT, I'M TANNING RIGHT THROUGH MY COSTUME.
HULK... YOU GOT ANY THOUGHTS ON HOW WE --
YOU!
YOU!

NOW --!
FINALLY!
HULK WILL SMASH!
TO BE CONTINUED!